

It will be observed that direct negotiations between employers and employees settled the majority of the disputes. The proportion of disputes so settled ranges between a minimum of 53 per cent. in 1917 and a maximum of 76 per cent. in 1921; in 1922 the proportion was 58 per cent. The number of dislocations settled by compulsory conferences or the intervention and assistance of officials under State or Commonwealth Arbitration Acts has slightly decreased during the period under review. In connexion with the comparatively large number of disputes which are classified as having been settled "By other methods," it must be mentioned that many stoppages of work occur each year, principally at collieries, but the cause for such stoppages is not officially known to the employers or their representatives. Such stoppages usually last for one day, and work is resumed without negotiations for a settlement of the trouble.

§ 9. Apprenticeship.

1. **General.**—Legislation dealing with the question of apprenticeship has been passed by all the State Parliaments. The earliest Act was that passed in 1828 by New South Wales enabling persons holding certain Government positions to take apprentices. It provided for the execution of indentures, and for disputes between masters and apprentices to be heard and settled by two Justices of the Peace. The term of apprenticeship was to be not less than 3 and not to exceed 7 years. Further enactments or amendments in the law relating to apprentices were made in 1834, 1844, 1850, and 1851. Legislation on similar lines was enacted in the other States.

Upon the introduction of Wages Board and Industrial Arbitration legislation the regulation of the terms of apprenticeship was included in the various State Industrial Acts. Thus, in New South Wales, the Industrial Arbitration Amendment Act of 1918 provides for the establishment of a Board of Trade. Included in the activities of this Board are the determination of the occupations and industries in which apprentices shall be employed and the conditions under which such apprentices shall be engaged.

The Factories and Shops Acts of Victoria, under which Wages Boards are appointed, also include provisions governing the employment of apprentices. The Industrial Arbitration Acts of Queensland, the Industrial Code of South Australia, the Industrial Arbitration Acts of Western Australia, and the Wages Board Act of Tasmania all contain provisions for the regulation of apprenticeship. Recently the Board of Trade, New South Wales, held an inquiry into the question of apprenticeship and published two extensive reports, containing recommendations for the future regulation of apprenticeship. In Victoria, a conference of representatives of the Government, Factories Department, Education Department, Trade Unions, and Employers' Organizations met at the end of 1921, and presented its report on the 28th August, 1922.

The New South Wales Board of Trade has published a scheme of regulations for apprenticeship. These regulations provide that every contract for engagement of a minor must be made in writing and lodged with the Board for registration. Any employer, partnership, or association of individuals may be the master of an apprentice. Minors may be employed on probation for 3 months. The term of apprenticeship is to be 5 years beginning at or before the age of 17. Every apprentice must attend a trade school for not less than 5 hours per week over a period of not less than 3 years. When under 16 years of age this attendance is to be wholly in the employer's time, and when over 17 years of age, 3 of the 5 hours are to be in the employee's time. Other provisions refer to wage rates for different years of apprenticeship and provide for a modification of regulations by the Board. These regulations have not been given effect to, except in the case of the bricklaying industry.

The Victorian Conference on apprenticeship recommended the appointment of an Apprenticeship Commission to carry out the scheme as outlined by the Conference. The proposed Commission was to consist of one representative of the Education Department, Technical Schools, and the Department of Labour respectively, three representatives of

employers, and three representatives of employees, from which Central Trade Committees would be appointed to control apprenticeship in various industrial groups of allied trades. These Trade Committees and the Apprenticeship Commission would be charged with the duty of regulating wages and conditions of apprentices, determining the nature of the technical training necessary, the proper proportion of apprentices and other cognate matters.

The Victorian Government has not yet introduced legislation to give effect to these recommendations, but it is considered probable that such legislation will be introduced in the near future.

2. Period of Apprenticeship.—The period of apprenticeship is fixed in the Awards of the various industrial tribunals, but there are considerable differences in the various industries. The following table gives for each State the number of Awards in which periods are fixed and the number of such Awards in which the period falls within the limits specified :—

APPRENTICESHIP.—PERIODS FIXED BY AWARDS.

Period.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	C'with. Court.	Total.
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MALES.

No period fixed (a)	..	97	..	68	22	12	19	3	221
2½ years	1	1
3 "	2	12	4	..	1	3	2	24
4 "	9	26	1	6	7	4	2	55
5 " ..	..	59	48	22	27	18	17	15	206
5½ " ..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
6 " ..	..	17	45	4	18	5	5	4	98
7 " ..	..	2	5	..	2	..	..	1	10
8 " ..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1

FEMALES.

6 months	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	2
1 year ..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
2 years ..	..	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	3
3 " ..	..	1	7	2	2	1	1	..	14
4 " ..	..	6	22	2	2	1	2	6	41
5 " ..	..	2	11	1	5	1	..	1	21
6 " ..	..	2	11	..	..	..	..	..	13
7 " ..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1

(a) Includes Awards in which apprenticeship is provided for, but in which no period is specified, and applies to both males and females.

From the above table it appears that where periods are specified in the case of males the majority of the awards provides for a 5 years' apprenticeship, while in the case of females the majority provides for a 4 years' apprenticeship.

3. Proportion of Apprentices to Journeymen and Journeywomen.—In the Awards of the Industrial Tribunals in which apprenticeship is provided for, the proportion of apprentices to journeymen and journeywomen is generally fixed. The following table

gives for males and females the number of Awards in which the proportion is in the ratios specified :—

APPRENTICES.—PROPORTION TO JOURNEYMEN AND JOURNEYWOMEN.

Proportion.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'ld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	C'with. Court.	Total.
MALES.								
1 to 1	16	3	11	1	..	15	1	47
1 to 2	21	19	13	4	12	1	2	72
1 to 3	30	100	8	12	7	7	5	169
1 to 4	18	..	4	5	8	..	2	37
1 to 5	6	..	..	..	1	..	2	9
1 to 6 .. .. .	..	..	..	1	1	..	1	3
Other proportions ..	7	9	4	2	..	..	..	22
FEMALES.								
1 to 1	3	9	1	1	..	2	2	18
1 to 2	2	4	1	..	1	..	..	8
1 to 3	2	38	..	..	..	..	..	40
Other proportions ..	4	3	2	1	..	..	2	12

In the case of both males and females the predominant proportion of apprentices is 1 to 3 adults.

Provisions are made in the Awards with regard to improvers, also for the rate of wages for each year of service for both apprentices and improvers.

It is proposed to investigate this matter further, and to publish a comprehensive report thereon in the next issue of the Labour Report published by this Bureau.

§ 10. Retail Prices and House Rents.

1. *Introduction.*—(i) *General.* In Labour Report No. 1, issued in December, 1912, the results of certain investigations into the subjects of Prices, Price-Indexes and Cost of Living in past years were published, and some account was given of the methods employed for the collection of the data and of the technique adopted in the computation of the results. A detailed examination of the theory upon which the calculation of the index-numbers is based was given, but being necessarily too technical for the ordinary reader, was relegated to Appendixes. In Labour Reports Nos. 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13, results of further investigations were included, and in Labour Bulletins Nos. 1 to 18, and in Quarterly Summaries of Statistics, Nos. 70 to 90, information was incorporated regarding variations in retail and wholesale prices, house rent, and purchasing-power of money up to the end of 1922.

(ii) *Computation of Index-Numbers.* It must here suffice to state that the method adopted for the computation of the index-numbers is what may very properly be called the "aggregate expenditure" method. The first process is, of course, to work out the average price of each commodity included, and numbers (called "mass-units") representing the *relative* extent to which each commodity was on the average used or consumed are then computed. The price in any year of each commodity multiplied by its corresponding "mass-unit" represents, therefore, the relative total expenditure on that commodity in that year *on the basis of the adopted regimen*. It follows, therefore, that by taking for any year the sum of the price of each commodity multiplied by its corresponding